



## **ISKATEWIZAAGEGAN NO.39 INDEPENDENT FIRST NATION**

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### **FIRST NATION (SHOAL LAKE NO. 39) GOES TO COURT OVER WINNIPEG AND ONTARIO'S DISHONOURABLE DEALINGS AROUND THE TAKING OF WATER**

**March 26, 2024**

Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 (Shoal Lake No. 39) is in Court today arguing about the scope of their claim for compensation against the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Ontario. Both Defendants are resisting a motion by the First Nation to assert that a taking of their water rights (as originally stipulated in Treaty and Statute in the 1890's) was engineered by the Defendants to facilitate the creation of the Winnipeg water project.

Despite access to at least three lakes located in the province of Manitoba (Lakes Winnipegosis, Manitoba, and Winnipeg), Winnipeg instead built a 150-kilometre aqueduct that remains the biggest and longest straw in Canada. To this day, Shoal Lake continues to be the sole source of drinking water for the City of Winnipeg. Evidence demonstrates that Winnipeg has profited extensively (in the tens of millions of dollars) from accessing the waters of Shoal Lake for 110 years and has **never** paid reparations to Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation.

Rachel Green, member of IIFN, said:

“I am proud of our community for telling our truth. For too long, we have been invisible, forgotten and ignored. But this is Anishinaabe land, and Anishinaabe water runs over it. We will fight to have our water rights be part of this claim, and they will eventually be recognized.”

Gerald Lewis, Chief of IIFN, said:

“Winnipeg and Ontario have fought us at every turn. They refuse to answer our questions, they fight about what we can legally claim as a First Nation. But we know our history, and we have watched their city profit and grow, while our community struggles. This lawsuit will see those wrongs addressed.

Legal Counsel for IIFN, Julian Falconer of Falconers LLP, said:

“It is frustrating in the day and age of reconciliation to be in court over whether a claim can go forward, whether my client can make a claim for an injustice, rather than simply dealing with the injustice itself. The historical evidence is clear, the water rights of the Anishinaabe were taken to enable Winnipeg's success. Ontario played a role in facilitating the steal. But rather than confront this, they are trying to block the claim, using procedure as a weak defence to dishonourable dealings.

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